

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERN 01115 130821Z

44

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION GENEVA

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ROME FOR FODAG, PARIS FOR UNESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: OTHER DONOR ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY POPULATION
AND FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS

1. SUMMARY. SWISS POPULATION ASSISTANCE LIMITED TO SMALL
CONTRIBUTION TO UNFPA. INCREASE IN THIS CONTRIBUTION
AND POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF POPULATION ASSISTANCE TO INCLUDE
BILATERAL PROGRAMS DEPENDENT ON OUTCOME OF JUNE 13 REFERENDUM
ON SWISS CONTRIBUTION TO IDA AND EASING OF CURRENT BUDGETARY
RESTRICTIONS. END SUMMARY.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BERN 01115 130821Z

2. EMBOFF DISCUSSED CURRENT AND FUTURE SWISS POPULATION PROGRAMS WITH DR. ROLF WILHELM, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DELEGATE FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION, FEDERAL POLITICAL DEPARTMENT (FOREIGN OFFICE), WHO IS THE GOS OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF SWISS POPULATION ASSISTANCE.

3. WILHELM SAID SWITZERLAND'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) AMOUNTED TO APPROXIMATELY SF 220 MILLION IN 1973 (ABOUT DOLS 70 MILLION AT AVERAGE 1973 EXCHANGE RATE), AND ABOUT SF 200 MILLION IN BOTH 1974 AND 1975 (DOLS 68 MILLION AND DOLS 78 MILLION, RESPECTIVELY). HE INDICATED THAT THE GOS HOPES TO REACH THE DOLS 100 MILLION LEVEL PROJECTED BY THE OECD FOR 1976 BUT MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE OUTCOME OF THE JUNE 13 REFERENDUM ON SWITZERLAND'S PROPOSED SF 200 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IDA). THIS WILL BE THE FIRST REAL TEST OF PUBLIC WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT AID PROGRAMS. IF THE CONTRIBUTION IS APPROVED, THE GOS WOULD TAKE IT AS A SIGNAL TO EXPAND ITS AID PROGRAMS WITH AN ODA TARGET OF 0.20 PER CENT OF GNP BY 1980 (ODA WAS 0.14 PER CENT OF GNP IN BOTH 1975 AND 1974). THIS INCREASE, HOWEVER, IS NOT LIKELY TO OCCUR UNTIL THE RECESSION IS OVER.

4. WILHELM EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT THE IDA CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE APPROVED. HE ALSO SAID THAT OPPOSITION TO THE NEW DEVELOPMENT LAW (SEE BERN A-45, 2/25/75), WHICH WAS JUST PASSED BY THE PARLIAMENT, APPEARS TO BE WANING AND A NATIONAL REFERENDUM MAY NOT BE NECESSARY.

5. UP TO NOW SWITZERLAND'S OFFICIAL POPULATION ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN LIMITED TO AN ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION OF SF 600,000 (ABOUT DOLS 232,500 IN 1975) TO THE UNFPA. THIS REPRESENTS ONLY THREE-TENTHS OF ONE PER CENT OF SWISS ODA. WILHELM STATED THAT AN INCREASE IN THIS CONTRIBUTION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT NO DECISION WILL BE MADE UNTIL AFTER THE JUNE 13 REFERENDUM. HE REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON HOW

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BERN 01115 130821Z

MUCH THE INCREASE MIGHT BE OR TO PROJECT FUNDING FOR POPULATION PROGRAMS OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT IF ALL GOES WELL WITH THE IDA REFERENDUM AND THE DEVELOPMENT LAW, THE GOS WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ADDING A FEW, SELECT BILATERAL POPULATION PROGRAMS. ADDITION OF BILATERAL PROGRAMS WOULD REQUIRE MORE FUNDS SINCE GOS DOES NOT WISH TO SHIFT FUNDS OUT OF OTHER EXISTING AID PROGRAMS.

SWISS PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES DO NOT GIVE ANY
DIRECT POPULATION ASSISTANCE.

6. SWISS OFFICIALS ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE
POPULATION PROGRAM BUT DECIDED SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT
GIVEN THE SMALL SIZE OF TOTAL SWISS AID PROGRAM IT WAS
MORE EFFICIENT TO CONCENTRATE ON EFFECTS TO INCREASE
LDC FOOD PRODUCTION. THE BUCHAREST POPULATION CONFERENCE
AND THE VISIT LAST YEAR OF PHILANDER CLAXTON, HOWEVER,
HAVE HELPED TO SHARPEN SWISS INTEREST IN DOING MORE IN
THE POPULATION FIELD. VARIOUS PUBLIC OPINION POLLS
HAVE INDICATED THAT THE SWISS PEOPLE ARE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC
ABOUT AID IN GENERAL THAN ARE GOS OFFICIALS. WITH
REGARD TO POPULATION CONTROL, MOREOVER, THE EXISTENCE
OF A LARGE CATHOLIC MINORITY IN SWITZERLAND HAS PROMPTED
GOS TO KEEP POPULATION PORTION OF AID PROGRAM SMALL
AND LOW KEY. THE NEW DEVELOPMENT LAW, HOWEVER,
SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS POPULATION GROWTH AS A
MAJOR PROBLEM TO BE GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY.

7. THE PRESENT POPULATION PROGRAM IS UNDER THE
DIRECT CONTROL OF WILHELM. WILHELM TOLD US
THAT ALTHOUGH A FEW YEARS AGO THE GOS WAS " NOT
HAPPY" WITH THE UNFPA, THIS ATTITUDE HAS
CHANGED AND THE GOS NOW BELIEVES UNFPA IS THE MOST
EFFICIENT CHANNEL FOR LIMITED SWISS FUNDS AVAILABLE
FOR POPULATION ASSISTANCE.

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